

Appln. No. 10/687,384

Attorney Docket No. 10541-1868

II. Remarks

Reconsideration and re-examination of this application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is herein respectfully requested.

Claim Objections

Claims 3, 9, 11, 14, 19, and 23 have been amended to provide proper antecedent basis. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the objections to the aforementioned claims.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 2-6, 8-14, 17, 18, 20 and 22-24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention.

Claims 2-6, and 8-14 have been amended to refer to "the controller" or "a sensor" to provide additional structure, thereby particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention. Claims 17, 18, 20, 22, and 24 are claims directed to a method and, therefore, do not require any additional structure. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the objections under 35 U.S.C. §112.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §102(e)

Claims 1, 2, 5, 7, 15, 16, 19, and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,578,444 to Wendelin (Wendelir).

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Claim 1 recites "a clutch adapted to couple the steering shaft with the road wheel when the road wheel is in an end of travel condition" and claim 15 recites "coupling the steering mechanism to the road wheel mechanically". As such, the steering wheel receives mechanical resistance through the road wheel actuation system.

The Examiner contends Wendelin teaches coupling the shaft with the road wheel when the road wheel is in an end of travel condition. Wendelin teaches a clutch 102 coupling the steering shaft 700 to a brake module 106 that is independent from the road wheel actuation system. Since the steering shaft is independent of the road wheel actuation system, the clutch 102 does not couple steering shaft 700 to the road wheel. Therefore, Wendelin does not teach the present invention. Claims 2, 5, 7, 16, 19, and 21 depend directly or indirectly from claims 1 or 15 and are, therefore, patentable for at least the reasons given above in support of claims 1 and 15. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 3, 4, 6, 17, 18 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 6,578,444 to Wendelin (Wendelin) in view of U.S. Patent 6,557,662 to Andonian et al. (Andonian).

Claims 8, 10, 22 and 24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 6,578,444 to Wendelin (Wendelin) in view of U.S. Patent 6,598,695 to Menjak et al. (Menjak).

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Claims 9, 11, 13 and 23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 6,578,444 to Wendelin (Wendelin) in view of U.S. Patent 6,484,838 to Borsting et al. (Borsting).

Claims 12 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 6,578,444 to Wendelin (Wendelin) in view of U.S. Patent 6,484,838 to Borsting et al. (Borsting), and further in view of U.S. Patent 6,557,662 to Andonian et al. (Andonian).

Claims 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18, 20, 22, 23, and 24 depend directly or indirectly from claims 1 or 15 and are, therefore, patentable over Wendelin for at least the reasons given above in support of claims 1 and 15. Further, the other cited references do not teach or suggest mechanically coupling the steering shaft with the road wheel. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103.

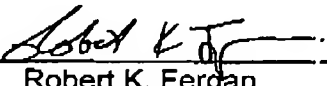
Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present form of the claims are patentably distinguishable over the art of record and that this application is now in condition for allowance. Such action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted by,

Dated: 11/15/04

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